

## Northeast Region Forest Pest Update – 03/15/06

### Topics covered this month:

#### Insects:

Banded Ash Clearwing  
Emerald Ash Borer management strategies  
Snow Fleas  
Termites in Mulch – urban legend

#### Diseases:

No disease issues to report this month

#### Other:

Squirrel damage on Pine Gall Rust

### Insects:

**Banded Ash Clearwing** – both Lilac/ash Borer (*Podotesia syringae*) and Banded Ash Clearwing (*Podotesia aureocincta*) are wood-boring caterpillars that attack ash by boring under the bark in the cambium layer. Galleries under the bark usually have a horizontal portion and a vertical portion, creating an ‘L’ shape and there will eventually be 2 holes associated with each gallery, an entrance hole where frass, sawdust, and sap will ooze from the tree, and an exit hole where the adult will emerge when the lifecycle is complete. Adults look similar to a wasp but are actually a clearwing moth, which cannot sting like wasps do. They pupate under the bark and when they are



ready to emerge as adults they bore out through the bark and leave the pupal case sticking out of the bark (above). This adult (left) recently emerged from a sample that I had collected last summer. Adults in this area usually emerge in late summer (August/September). Adults prefer to lay eggs on open-grown ash and urban ash trees and they will choose a tree that has been

recently pruned if they can find one.

**Emerald Ash Borer management strategies** – in states where EAB is currently present the management strategies are being re-evaluated. Due to a lack of funding from the federal government for control of EAB, states have to make some tough decisions about where to conduct eradication measures and where not to. The current strategies are as follows:



Michigan: will focus efforts on the gateway areas of the state, including the southern border and Mackinaw Bridge.

Eradication activities are limited to outliers located in/near the gateway areas. The monetary fines for breaking the quarantine were raised substantially and enforcement of the quarantine continues. And, Michigan is focusing a lot of effort on trying to limit the movement of firewood out of the Lower Peninsula.

Ohio: will focus on containment of the ash tree-killing pest to Northwest Ohio through quarantine regulation, statewide detection, and, when funding is available, eradication only of extreme outlier infestations

Indiana: will continue to monitor and delineate infested areas but has stopped requiring the removal of trees in an infested area. The state will no longer pay for ash tree removal. In infested areas the state will focus on restricting the movement of ash trees and ash products.

Ontario, Canada: from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency webpage I gathered the following information. They continue to survey for EAB and, when they find an infestation, they establish a quarantine area and prohibit the movement of ash materials out of those infested areas. Their current goal is to slow the spread. I was unable to find information on whether or not they are doing any eradication.

**Snow fleas** – although most of our snow is gone I have received a few calls in the last month about snow fleas (right). On sunny days snow fleas will gather on top of the snow. This black mass of tiny jumping critters is what people notice. Although they are commonly called snow fleas they are not a flea at all,



they're not even closely related to fleas.

They are technically a Collembola, or a springtail, which is a small wingless insect that is capable of "springing"

around. They will not bite or bother you in any way and they don't spread disease; they are a decomposer and feed on dead leaves, bark, and other plant materials. The photo at left shows a group of Collembola (aka Snow Fleas) gathered on a tree with my pen for size comparison, there are approximately



300-400 Collembola in this photo.

**Termites in Mulch urban legend email** – an email has been circulating widely in the Midwest warning folks about termites in mulch. The email claims that following hurricanes Rita and Katrina, that a lot of termite infested trees were made into mulch and would then be sold in garden centers around the nation. Many of you have already seen the email that I sent around refuting this claim. Below are some of the reasons why the risk is so low of getting Formosan Termites in your mulch:

1 – Formosan termites are subterranean and would not usually live in mulch, nor would they be expected to be able to survive in mulch.

2 – the mulching process is very tough on soft-bodied insects and few would survive

3 – Formosan termites are subtropical, they probably couldn't survive our winters

4 – there are 2 quarantines in place covering the areas affected by Rita and Katrina which require that all woody debris go to a landfill, it cannot leave those areas.

More information can be found at the urban legends website

<http://www.snopes.com/inboxer/household/termites.asp>

## Diseases:

Nothing this month, sorry, maybe next month. ☺

## Other:

**Squirrel Damage on Galls** – squirrels will occasionally focus their feeding efforts on galls. This photo shows squirrel damage to galls from the disease Eastern Gall Rust (sometimes referred to as Pine-Oak Gall Rust) on Jack Pine, the squirrels have eaten all the bark off the gall but left the bark on the branches, guess the galls must be more tasty.



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